This page provides a copy of the **Commission’s complaints policy** (updated 17 Dec 2018) relating to complaints about us.  Also see our [Complaints About Us](https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/about-us/complaints-about-us) page.

**Policy statement**

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (the Commission) is committed to resolving complaints about its practices and services fairly, efficiently and effectively. We apply the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness in investigating and responding to complaints.

As a regulatory agency, we welcome feedback from external stakeholders. Through this policy, we demonstrate our commitment to actively seek and use feedback received via complaints to improve the way we do things.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to document the Commission’s approach to managing complaints from external stakeholders about its practices and services. The policy affirms and supports the right of care recipients, their representatives, service providers, government and non-government agencies, and members of the public to make a complaint if dissatisfied with our practices and services.

We recognise that complaints are an important mechanism we can use to continually improve our practices and services. This policy provides a framework for taking a consistent and professional approach to complaint handling.

**Legislative and policy framework**

[*Public Service Act 1999*](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/C2004A00538)(links to Government Legislation Register website)

[Public Service Regulations 1999](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/F1999B00307)(links to Government Legislation Register website)

[Australian Public Service Commissioner’s Direction](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2016L01430) (links to Government Legislation Register website)

[APS Values](http://www.apsc.gov.au/working-in-the-aps/your-rights-and-responsibilities-as-an-aps-employee/aps-values) (links to Australian Public Service Commission website)

[APS Code of Conduct](http://www.apsc.gov.au/working-in-the-aps/your-rights-and-responsibilities-as-an-aps-employee/code-of-conduct) (links to Australian Public Service Commission website)

[Assessor Code of Conduct](https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/about-us/assessors#quality)

[Regulator Performance Framework](https://www.cuttingredtape.gov.au/resources/rpf)  (links to Government's Cutting Red Tape website)

**Scope**

This policy applies to all services provided by the Commission to external stakeholders by staff whether seconded, on contract or temporary arrangement, and externally contracted assessors.

Matters not covered by this policy which are dealt with through separate processes include:

* complaints about regulatory decisions made by the Commission
* complaints about fees and charges applied by the Commission
* complaints about aged care facilities or services
* internal staff grievances, code of conduct investigations and public interest disclosures about staff.

**Organisation commitment**

The Commission is committed to fair, effective and efficient complaint handling processes. This includes:

* providing a culture that values complaints and their effective resolution
* establishing and maintaining an efficient complaint management system
* demonstrating best practice complaint handling practices
* addressing each complaint with integrity and in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner
* promoting and complying with complaint handling policies and procedures
* releasing this policy to our staff, and to the public via our website
* reporting publicly on the number of complaints received
* regularly analysing complaint data to support continuous service improvement
* assisting people to make a complaint if needed
* ensuring that people making a complaint are not adversely affected in regulatory actions
* treating all people with respect, including people who make a complaint.

**Definitions**

**Complaint**

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction from an external stakeholder made to the Commission about our practices and services. A complaint can also be about our handling of a complaint where a response or resolution was expected or required.

**Complaint management system**

All policies, procedures, practices, staff, hardware and software used by us in the management of complaints.

**Grievance**

A clear formal written statement with an individual staff member about another staff member or a work related problem

**Responding to complaints**

The Commission is committed to responding to complaints about our practices and services in a timely manner.

* We will promptly acknowledge receipt of complaints.
* We will assess and prioritise complaints in accordance with the urgency and seriousness of the issues raised. If a matter concerns an immediate risk to safety or security the response will be immediate and will be escalated appropriately.
* We are committed to managing people’s expectations and will inform them as soon as possible of the following:

-        the complaints process
-        the expected timeframes for our actions
-        the progress of the complaint and reasons for any delay
-        their involvement in the process
-        the possible or likely outcome of their complaint

We will advise people as soon as possible when we are unable to deal with any part of their complaint and provide advice about where such issues and or complaints may be directed. We will also advise people as soon as possible when we are unable to meet our timeframes for responding to their complaint and the reasons for our delay.

**Accessibility**

The Commission will ensure that information about how and where complaints may be made to or about is well publicised. We will make sure that our systems to manage complaints are easily accessible to everyone, particularly people who may require assistance.

**Anonymous complaints**

The Commission will accept anonymous complaints and will carry out an investigation of the issues raised where there is sufficient information provided.

**Confidentiality**

We will protect the identity of people making complaints where this is practice and appropriate. Personal information that identifies individuals will only be disclosed or used by the Commission as permitted under the relevant privacy law secrecy provisions and any relevant obligations.

**Responsibility**

The Executive Director, Operations has primary responsibility for the management of complaints covered by this policy.

**Also see our**[**Complaints About Us**](https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/about-us/complaints-about-us)**web page for information about making a complaint about us.**